

PATENTS

**IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE
BEFORE THE BOARD OF PATENT APPEALS AND INTERFERENCES**

Applicant:	Guo, Fangjiang	Atty. Docket:	88164.000002
Serial No.:	10/062,957	Examiner:	Piasecik, Susan L.
Filed:	January 31, 2002	Art Unit:	3643
Title:	SYSTEM FOR THE PRESENTATION OF ANIMALS TO BE MILKED AND METHOD		

Appeal Brief Pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §1.192

Mail Stop Appeal Brief - Patents
Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

RECEIVED
CENTRAL FAX CENTER
AUG 02 2005

Sir:

Real Party in Interest

The inventor is the sole owner of the application and is the real party in interest.

Related Appeals and Interferences

There are no other appeals or interferences known to appellant or the appellant's legal representative, which will directly affect or be directly affected by or have a bearing on the Board's decision in the pending appeal.

Status of Claims

Claims 1-34 and 36-51 are pending in the application. All claims were finally rejected. After Applicant's Appeal Brief was filed, prosecution was reopened and all claims were made subject of a restriction requirement. Accordingly, Claims 1-31 and 42-51 are withdrawn from consideration. Claims 32-34 and 36-41 having been finally rejected are subject to the present appeal.

Status of Amendments

No amendments subsequent to the final action have been filed. An amendment, filed December 2, 2004, in response to the Office Action of June 3, 2004, was entered.

Summary of the Invention

The invention is a method of presenting an animal to be milked and in particular involves moving an animal by a transport cart to an unoccupied milking stall. As set out in independent Claim 32 the method involves the steps of

a) moving a first animal to be milked onto a first transport cart 70 (p.14, lines 1-10; p. 18, lines 1-6; see Figures 1-3, 6 and 7; note also "A" in Figures 1 and 2);

b) translating the transport cart 70 along a predetermined path relative to a plurality of milking stalls to align it with an unoccupied milking stall 20 (p. 15, lines 18-29; p.18, lines 7-10; see Figures 1-3 and 6); and

c) moving the animal from the transport cart and into an unoccupied milking stall (p. 16, lines 24-26; p.18, lines 7-11; see Figures 1 and 2 showing the unloading of an animal from "A").

Dependent Claim 33 adds to Claim 32 forming a released area 180 adjacent the plurality of milking stalls 20 (p. 13, lines 25-29; p. 16, line 29 to p.17, line 16; p. 18, lines 21-24; see Figures 1 and 2).

Dependent Claim 34 adds to Claim 32 locating a robotic arm 44 with respect to the milking stall 20 to dispose a milking claw (no reference but shown in Figure 12-14 at the end of arm 44) in the milking stall (p. 11, lines 12-23; see Figures 6-12).

Dependent Claim 36 adds to Claim 32 the translating of a second animal transport cart 70 relative to the plurality of milking stalls 20 (see "B" in Figures 1 and 2).

Dependent Claim 37 adds to Claim 32 the loading of a plurality of animals onto the first transport cart 70 (p. 14, lines 28-31; p.15, lines 7-11).

Dependent Claim 38 adds to Claim 32 the step of moving an ingress/egress gate 30 from an open to a closed position upon rearwardly

loading the animal into the milking stall 20 from the transport cart 70 (p.18, lines 7-17).

Dependent Claim 39 adds to Claim 32 the step of acquiring animal specific data during the transport of the animal (p. 15, lines 1-3; p.16, lines 1-16).

Dependent Claim 40 adds to Claim 32 the connecting of a radio frequency identification reader 78 to the first animal cart (p. 15, lines 1-3).

Dependent Claim 41 adds to Claim 32 the urging of the animal rearwardly into the milking stall by a distance independent of an adjacent milking stall (p 14, lines 5-10; p. 15, lines 26-30; see Figures 1 and 2 where the animals back into a stall 20 from carts "A" or "B"

Issues

1. Whether Claims 32, 33, 36-38 and 41 are properly rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Waybright (US 5, 483, 921).
2. Whether Claims 34, 39 and 40 are properly rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Waybright '921 in view of van der Lely '837.

Argument

Applicant believes that a summary of the teachings of each of the cited and applied references will facilitate an understanding of Applicant's arguments.

Waybright, US 5, 483, 921, discloses a milking system wherein the animals walk forward from a holding pen 14 and into stalls 46 that are on a transport car 22. The car then moves along a path 21 and, in transit, passes a plurality of aligned stations 26, 82, 30 where operations such as washing and drying are performed on the animals in the stalls on the transport car. At the end of the path is a milking station 32. The car is stopped at the milking station; and the animals, while still in the stalls on the car, are milked. After milking, the car is returned along a parallel path 23 to the starting point where the animals walk in a forward direction off the car and onto an unloading platform 16.

As noted above, the animals are milked on the car so there is no movement of the animal from the car and into a milking stall and no alignment of the car with the ingress/egress end of a milking stall.

van der Lely, US 5, 771, 837, discloses a milking system wherein animals held in a housing area 1 are enticed by feed to move one at a time head first into a selection stall 3 where transponders on each animal in conjunction with sensors at the selection stall determine if a given animal should be milked. If selected, the animal is allowed to move forward from the selection stall and into a milking stall 2. The animal is automatically connected to a milking machine for milking after which the animal leaves the milking stall head first and reenters the housing area. Sensors at the stalls collect certain animal-related data from each animal.

1. Claims 32, 33, 36-38 and 41 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Waybright '921.

A. In Waybright, the animals walk head first from a loading pen 14 first into a loading station 24 and then into stalls 46 arranged side-by-side on a car 22. The car moves along a forward segment 21 of a path that carries the animals through a sequence of stations 26, 28 and 30 (holding about 12 minutes at each station) until a milking station 32 is reached at the end of the path. At the milking station, the car is stopped and an operator connects each animal on the car to milking machines (see col. 6, lines 53-57). After milking, the car first is moved to a transfer station 36 where the car reverses direction for travel back along a parallel segment 23 to an unloading or exit station 38 (the exit station 38 being adjacent the loading station 24). At the unloading station, the animals are moved off of the car (and out of the stalls 46) head first.

The Examiner considers that Waybright teaches translating a transport cart relative to milking stalls 32 and moving the animal into the stall (Final Rejection, p. 4). However, as perceived by the Applicant, Waybright '921 discloses a method and associated apparatus involving:

- moving the animals head first into stalls 46 arranged on a car 22;

- moving the car to a milking station 32 and milking the animals while they remain on the car 22;
- moving the car 22 back towards the point of beginning; and
- moving the animals in a head-first direction out of the stalls 46 and off of the car 22.

B. Independent Claim 32 (and dependent Claims 33 and 36-38) recites the method steps of:

“(b) translating the first animal transport cart ... to a plurality of milking stalls to operably locate the transport cart with respect to an unoccupied milking stall; and

“(c) moving an animal from the transport cart and into the unoccupied milking stall.”

In the reference, there is no moving of an animal from a cart (or car) and into an unoccupied milking stall because the stalls of the reference are on the car. Accordingly, there can be no moving of the car itself to an unoccupied milking stall because the stalls are themselves on the car.

As a further distinction, the reference lacks any disclosure of “moving the animal from the transport cart and into the unoccupied milking stall”. This is because in the reference, milking occurs while the animal remains in the stall on the car.

For a rejection under 35 U.S.C. 102 (b) to stand, each element of the claim(s) must be found in a single reference. This is not the case here with respect to the method of Claim 32. In particular, Waybright fails to anticipate the invention as set out in independent method claim 32 in that the reference fails to disclose at least the steps of:

- moving the animal on a transport cart to “locate the transport cart with respect to an unoccupied milking stall”; and
- “moving the animal from the transport cart and into the unoccupied milking stall.”

As the reference fails to disclose claimed method steps as recited in Claim 32, the rejection of independent Claim 32 (and dependent Claims 33 and 36-38

which include all the limitations of Claim 32) under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Waybright '921 cannot be sustained.

With respect to dependent Claim 33 the Examiner considers the Waybright area 36 a "released area". In fact no animal is "released" to Waybright's area 36. Instead Waybright's area 36 is a "return station" where the carts carrying the animals turn to go back to the starting point. No animal is "released" from Waybright's cart to the area 36. Accordingly, the rejection of Claim 33 as being anticipated by Waybright cannot be sustained.

With respect to dependent Claim 36 Waybright does not disclose translating a second transport cart relative to the plurality of milking stalls. The item 40 referenced by the Examiner as a "Transport cart" is in fact "a stationary motor assembly" and not a cart. Even so any second cart that might be disclosed by Waybright also could not move relative to a plurality of milking stalls because the milking stalls would be on the cart! Accordingly, the rejection of Claim 36 as being anticipated by Waybright cannot be sustained.

With respect to dependent Claim 41, it is pointed out that the reference clearly describes a method of moving the animals head first into stalls 46 arranged on the car 24 and then moving the animals head first out of the stalls and off the car. There is no disclosure of "urging the animals rearwardly into the milking stall" as set out in Claim 41. Accordingly, the rejection of Claim 41 as being anticipated by Waybright cannot be sustained.

2. Claims 34, 39 and 40 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102 (a) as being unpatentable over Waybright '921 in view of van der Lely ' 837.

A. Dependent method Claims 34, 39 and 40 include all the limitations of Claim 32 including the steps of "translating the ... transport cart ... relative to a plurality of milking stalls to operably locate the transport cars with respect to an unoccupied milking stall" and "moving the animal from the transport cart and into the unoccupied stall". Dependent Claim 34 adds the step of aligning a milking robot with one of the milking stalls, and Claims 39 and 40 add steps related to the monitoring of certain animal related criteria.


As noted above, Waybright does not disclose moving an animal from a cart and into a milking stall. In fact, the reference teaches away from doing so in that it specifically teaches having the animal remain in a stall and on the car during the milking process. The van der Lely '837 reference does not cure this defect. Even assuming for the sake of argument that there is a basis for combining the references, the resulting combination would, at most, include locating the robotic milking arm and monitoring animal-related criteria in connection with the milking of an animal on the translatable cart. This is not the invention claimed in method Claims 34, 39 and 40, as there is no translating of the cart to operably locate it with respect to an unoccupied milking stall and no moving of the animal from the cart and into the unoccupied milking stall.

For these reasons, the rejection of Claims 34, 39 and 40 under 35 U.S.C. 103 (a) as being unpatentable over Waybright in view of van der Lely cannot be sustained.

Conclusions

For the reasons as stated above, Applicant respectfully submits that all the claims subject to the present Appeal, namely Claims 32 –34 and 36–41 are in condition for allowance and that the rejection of the claims under both sections 102(b) and 103(a) of the Patent Law should be reversed.

Respectfully submitted,



Roger Aceto, Registration No. 24, 554
HARTER, SECREST & EMERY LLP
1600 Bausch & Lomb Place
Rochester, New York 14604
Telephone: 585-231-1118
Fax: 585-232-2152

Date: August 2, 2004

CLAIMS APPENDIX**Claims 32-34 and 36-41 on Appeal**

32. A method of presenting an animal to be milked in a milking parlor, the method comprising:

- (a) moving a first animal to be milked onto a first animal transport cart;
- (b) translating the first animal transport cart along a predetermined path relative to a plurality of milking stalls to operably locate the transport cart with respect to an unoccupied milking stall; and
- (c) moving the animal from the transport cart and into the unoccupied milking stall.

33. The method of Claim 32, further comprising forming a released area adjacent the plurality of milking stalls.

34. The method of Claim 32, further comprising operably locating a robotic arm with respect to the milking stall to dispose a milking claw into the milking stall.

35. (Cancelled)

36. The method of Claim 32, further comprising translating a second animal transport cart relative to the plurality of milking stalls.

37. The method of Claim 32, further comprising loading a plurality of animals onto the first animal transport cart.

38. The method of Claim 32, further comprising moving an ingress/egress gate from an open position to a closed position upon rearwardly loading the animal into the milking stall.

39. The method of Claim 32, further comprising acquiring data specific to a given animal during translation of the first animal transport cart.

40. The method of Claim 32, further comprising operably connecting a radio frequency identification reader to the first animal cart.

41. The method of Claim 32, further comprising urging the animal rearwardly into the milking stall by a distance independent of an adjacent milking stall.

Withdrawn Claims

1. A method of presenting an animal to be milked, the method comprising:
 - (a) rearwardly loading the animal into one of a plurality of milking stalls by passing the animal rearward through an ingress/egress end of the stall; and
 - (b) forwardly unloading the animal from the one of the plurality of milking stalls by passing the animal forward through the ingress/egress end and directly

into a common released area, each milking stall having its own unique exit path extending from the milking stall to the common released area.

2. The method of Claim 1, further comprising milking the animal prior to forwardly unloading the animal from the one of the plurality of milking stalls.

3. The method of Claim 1, further comprising passing the animal through an ingress/egress gate located at the ingress/egress end of the stall upon rearwardly loading the animal into the one of the plurality of milking stalls.

4. The method of Claim 1, further comprising operably aligning a milking robot with the one of the plurality of milking stalls prior to forwardly unloading the animal from the one of the plurality of milking stalls.

5. The method of Claim 1, further comprising loading the animal to be milked onto a transport cart and rearwardly loading the animal from the transport cart into the one of the plurality of milking stalls.

6. The method of Claim 1, further comprising monitoring animal specific data prior to unloading the animal from the one of the plurality of milking stalls.

7. The method of Claim 6, further comprising matching the monitored animal specific data with a corresponding identified animal.

8. The method of Claim 1, further comprising locating an operator pit adjacent a rear end of the milking stall.

9. The method of Claim 1, wherein the unique exit path associated with one of the plurality of milking stalls is parallel to a unique exit path associated with a second one of the milking stalls.

10. The method of Claim 1, further comprising moving a moveable platform from a spaced first position to a second position adjacent a rear end of the milking stall.

11. The method of Claim 1, further comprising simultaneously rearwardly loading a second animal into a second one of the plurality of milking stalls.

12. A method of presenting an animal to be milked, the method comprising:

(a) rearwardly loading the animal into a milking stall from a moveable transport cart; and

(b) forwardly unloading the animal from the milking stall directly into a common released area.

13. The method of Claim 12, further comprising milking the animal prior to forwardly unloading the animal from the milking stall.

14. The method of Claim 12, further comprising passing the animal tail first through an ingress/egress gate upon rearwardly loading the animal into the milking stall.
15. The method of Claim 12, further operatively aligning a milking robot with the milking stall prior to forwardly unloading the animal from the milking stall.
16. The method of Claim 12, further comprising loading the animal to be milked onto a transport cart prior to rearwardly loading the animal into the milking stall.
17. The method of Claim 12, further comprising monitoring animal specific information prior to unloading the animal from the milking stall.
18. The method of Claim 17, wherein monitoring animal specific information includes machine reading a tag connected to the animal.
19. The method of Claim 12, further comprising locating an operator pit adjacent a rear end of the milking stall.
20. The method of Claim 12, further comprising moving a moveable platform from a spaced first position to a second position adjacent a rear end of the milking stall.

21. The method of Claim 12, further comprising loading a plurality of animals onto the transport cart.

22. A method of presenting an animal to be milked, the method comprising:

(a) loading a first animal onto a transport cart;

(b) translating the transport cart to align with an unoccupied milking stall;

and

(c) rearwardly loading the first animal into the unoccupied milking stall from the transport cart.

23. The method of Claim 22, further comprising translating the transport cart along a direction transverse to a longitudinal dimension of the milking stall.

24. The method of Claim 22, further comprising forwardly unloading the first animal from the milking stall.

25. The method of Claim 22, further comprising forwardly unloading the first animal from the milking stall into a released area.

26. The method of Claim 22, further comprising forwardly unloading the first animal from the milking stall into a released area along a unique path.

27. The method of Claim 22, further comprising loading a second animal onto the transport cart prior to unloading the first animal.

28. The method of Claim 22, further comprising moving a moveable platform from a first position spaced from the milking stall to a second position adjacent a rear end of the milking stall.

29. The method of Claim 22, further comprising aligning a milking robot with the milking stall.

30. The method of Claim 22, further comprising acquiring animal specific data from the first animal on the transport cart.

31. The method of Claim 22, further comprising reading a radio frequency identification tag on the first cow when the first cow is in the transport cart.

42. A milking parlor comprising:

(a) a milking stall to receive an animal to be milked from a transport cart, the milking stall having an animal ingress/egress end; and

(b) the transport cart translatable relative to the milking stall between a first position aligned with the ingress/egress end of the milking stall and a second position spaced from the milking stall.

43. The milking parlor of Claim 42, further comprising an ingress/egress gate connected to the milking stall, the ingress/egress gate moveable between a closed position and an open position.

44. The milking parlor of Claim 43, wherein the ingress/egress gate is a lift gate.

45. The milking parlor of Claim 43, wherein the ingress/egress gate rotates about a horizontal axis.

46. The milking parlor of Claim 43, wherein the ingress/egress gate rotates about a vertical axis.

47. The milking parlor of Claim 42, wherein the milking stall includes a closed end opposite the ingress/egress end and further comprising an operator pit adjacent the closed end.

48. The milking parlor of Claim 42, further comprising a released area adjacent the ingress/egress end.

49. The milking parlor of Claim 42, further comprising a robotic arm connected relative to the milking stall and moveable between a milking position at least partially disposed within the milking stall and a retracted position at least partially disposed outside the milking stall.

50. The milking parlor of Claim 42, further comprising a RFID reader connected to the transport cart.

51. The milking parlor of Claim 42, further comprising a moveable platform moveable between a first position spaced from the milking stall and a second position adjacent a rear end of the milking stall.

EVIDENCE APPENDIX

NONE

RELATED PROCEEDINGS APPENDIX

NONE

PATENTS

**IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE
BEFORE THE BOARD OF PATENT APPEALS AND INTERFERENCES**

Applicant:	Guo, Fangjiang	Atty. Docket:	88164.000002
Serial No.:	10/062,957	Examiner:	Piasecik, Susan L.
Filed:	January 31, 2002	Art Unit:	3643
Title:	SYSTEM FOR THE PRESENTATION OF ANIMALS TO BE MILKED AND METHOD		

Appeal Brief Pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §1.192

Mail Stop Appeal Brief - Patents
Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Sir:

Real Party in Interest

The inventor is the sole owner of the application and is the real party in interest.

Related Appeals and Interferences

There are no other appeals or interferences known to appellant or the appellant's legal representative, which will directly affect or be directly affected by or have a bearing on the Board's decision in the pending appeal.

Status of Claims

Claims 1-34 and 36-51 are pending in the application. All claims were finally rejected. After Applicant's Appeal Brief was filed, prosecution was reopened and all claims were made subject of a restriction requirement. Accordingly, Claims 1-31 and 42-51 are withdrawn from consideration. Claims 32-34 and 36-41 having been finally rejected are subject to the present appeal.

Status of Amendments

No amendments subsequent to the final action have been filed. An amendment, filed December 2, 2004, in response to the Office Action of June 3, 2004, was entered.

Summary of the Invention

The invention is a method of presenting an animal to be milked and in particular involves moving an animal by a transport cart to an unoccupied milking stall. As set out in independent Claim 32 the method involves the steps of

a) moving a first animal to be milked onto a first transport cart 70 (p.14, lines 1-10; p. 18, lines 1-6; see Figures 1-3, 6 and 7; note also "A" in Figures 1 and 2);

b) translating the transport cart 70 along a predetermined path relative to a plurality of milking stalls to align it with an unoccupied milking stall 20 (p. 15, lines 18-29; p.18, lines 7-10; see Figures 1-3 and 6); and

c) moving the animal from the transport cart and into an unoccupied milking stall (p. 16, lines 24-26; p.18, lines 7-11; see Figures 1 and 2 showing the unloading of an animal from "A").

Dependent Claim 33 adds to Claim 32 forming a released area 180 adjacent the plurality of milking stalls 20 (p. 13, lines 25-29; p. 16, line 29 to p.17, line 16; p. 18, lines 21-24; see Figures 1 and 2).

Dependent Claim 34 adds to Claim 32 locating a robotic arm 44 with respect to the milking stall 20 to dispose a milking claw (no reference but shown in Figure 12-14 at the end of arm 44) in the milking stall (p. 11, lines 12-23; see Figures 6-12).

Dependent Claim 36 adds to Claim 32 the translating of a second animal transport cart 70 relative to the plurality of milking stalls 20 (see "B" in Figures 1 and 2).

Dependent Claim 37 adds to Claim 32 the loading of a plurality of animals onto the first transport cart 70 (p. 14, lines 28-31; p.15, lines 7-11).

Dependent Claim 38 adds to Claim 32 the step of moving an ingress/egress gate 30 from an open to a closed position upon rearwardly

loading the animal into the milking stall 20 from the transport cart 70 (p.18, lines 7-17).

Dependent Claim 39 adds to Claim 32 the step of acquiring animal specific data during the transport of the animal (p. 15, lines 1-3; p.16, lines 1-16).

Dependent Claim 40 adds to Claim 32 the connecting of a radio frequency identification reader 78 to the first animal cart (p. 15, lines 1-3).

Dependent Claim 41 adds to Claim 32 the urging of the animal rearwardly into the milking stall by a distance independent of an adjacent milking stall (p 14, lines 5-10; p. 15, lines 26-30; see Figures 1 and 2 where the animals back into a stall 20 from carts "A" or "B")

Issues

1. Whether Claims 32, 33, 36-38 and 41 are properly rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Waybright (US 5, 483, 921).
2. Whether Claims 34, 39 and 40 are properly rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Waybright '921 in view of van der Lely '837.

Argument

Applicant believes that a summary of the teachings of each of the cited and applied references will facilitate an understanding of Applicant's arguments.

Waybright, US 5, 483, 921, discloses a milking system wherein the animals walk forward from a holding pen 14 and into stalls 46 that are on a transport car 22. The car then moves along a path 21 and, in transit, passes a plurality of aligned stations 26, 82, 30 where operations such as washing and drying are performed on the animals in the stalls on the transport car. At the end of the path is a milking station 32. The car is stopped at the milking station; and the animals, while still in the stalls on the car, are milked. After milking, the car is returned along a parallel path 23 to the starting point where the animals walk in a forward direction off the car and onto an unloading platform 16.

As noted above, the animals are milked on the car so there is no movement of the animal from the car and into a milking stall and no alignment of the car with the ingress/egress end of a milking stall.

van der Lely, US 5, 771, 837, discloses a milking system wherein animals held in a housing area 1 are enticed by feed to move one at a time head first into a selection stall 3 where transponders on each animal in conjunction with sensors at the selection stall determine if a given animal should be milked. If selected, the animal is allowed to move forward from the selection stall and into a milking stall 2. The animal is automatically connected to a milking machine for milking after which the animal leaves the milking stall head first and reenters the housing area. Sensors at the stalls collect certain animal-related data from each animal.

1. Claims 32, 33, 36-38 and 41 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Waybright '921.

A. In Waybright, the animals walk head first from a loading pen 14 first into a loading station 24 and then into stalls 46 arranged side-by-side on a car 22. The car moves along a forward segment 21 of a path that carries the animals through a sequence of stations 26, 28 and 30 (holding about 12 minutes at each station) until a milking station 32 is reached at the end of the path. At the milking station, the car is stopped and an operator connects each animal on the car to milking machines (see col. 6, lines 53-57). After milking, the car first is moved to a transfer station 36 where the car reverses direction for travel back along a parallel segment 23 to an unloading or exit station 38 (the exit station 38 being adjacent the loading station 24). At the unloading station, the animals are moved off of the car (and out of the stalls 46) head first.

The Examiner considers that Waybright teaches translating a transport cart relative to milking stalls 32 and moving the animal into the stall (Final Rejection, p. 4). However, as perceived by the Applicant, Waybright '921 discloses a method and associated apparatus involving:

- moving the animals head first into stalls 46 arranged on a car 22;

- moving the car to a milking station 32 and milking the animals while they remain on the car 22;
- moving the car 22 back towards the point of beginning; and
- moving the animals in a head-first direction out of the stalls 46 and off of the car 22.

B. Independent Claim 32 (and dependent Claims 33 and 36-38) recites the method steps of:

"(b) translating the first animal transport cart ... to a plurality of milking stalls to operably locate the transport cart with respect to an unoccupied milking stall; and

"(c) moving an animal from the transport cart and into the unoccupied milking stall."

In the reference, there is no moving of an animal from a cart (or car) and into an unoccupied milking stall because the stalls of the reference are on the car. Accordingly, there can be no moving of the car itself to an unoccupied milking stall because the stalls are themselves on the car.

As a further distinction, the reference lacks any disclosure of "moving the animal from the transport cart and into the unoccupied milking stall". This is because in the reference, milking occurs while the animal remains in the stall on the car.

For a rejection under 35 U.S.C. 102 (b) to stand, each element of the claim(s) must be found in a single reference. This is not the case here with respect to the method of Claim 32. In particular, Waybright fails to anticipate the invention as set out in independent method claim 32 in that the reference fails to disclose at least the steps of:

- moving the animal on a transport cart to "locate the transport cart with respect to an unoccupied milking stall"; and
- "moving the animal from the transport cart and into the unoccupied milking stall."

As the reference fails to disclose claimed method steps as recited in Claim 32, the rejection of independent Claim 32 (and dependent Claims 33 and 36-38

which include all the limitations of Claim 32) under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Waybright '921 cannot be sustained.

With respect to dependent Claim 33 the Examiner considers the Waybright area 36 a "released area". In fact no animal is "released" to Waybright's area 36. Instead Waybright's area 36 is a "return station" where the carts carrying the animals turn to go back to the starting point. No animal is "released" from Waybright's cart to the area 36. Accordingly, the rejection of Claim 33 as being anticipated by Waybright cannot be sustained.

With respect to dependent Claim 36 Waybright does not disclose translating a second transport cart relative to the plurality of milking stalls. The item 40 referenced by the Examiner as a "Transport cart" is in fact "a stationary motor assembly" and not a cart. Even so any second cart that might be disclosed by Waybright also could not move relative to a plurality of milking stalls because the milking stalls would be on the cart! Accordingly, the rejection of Claim 36 as being anticipated by Waybright cannot be sustained.

With respect to dependent Claim 41, it is pointed out that the reference clearly describes a method of moving the animals head first into stalls 46 arranged on the car 24 and then moving the animals head first out of the stalls and off the car. There is no disclosure of "urging the animals rearwardly into the milking stall" as set out in Claim 41. Accordingly, the rejection of Claim 41 as being anticipated by Waybright cannot be sustained.

2. Claims 34, 39 and 40 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102 (a) as being unpatentable over Waybright '921 in view of van der Lely ' 837.

A. Dependent method Claims 34, 39 and 40 include all the limitations of Claim 32 including the steps of "translating the ... transport cart ... relative to a plurality of milking stalls to operably locate the transport cars with respect to an unoccupied milking stall" and "moving the animal from the transport cart and into the unoccupied stall". Dependent Claim 34 adds the step of aligning a milking robot with one of the milking stalls, and Claims 39 and 40 add steps related to the monitoring of certain animal related criteria.

As noted above, Waybright does not disclose moving an animal from a cart and into a milking stall. In fact, the reference teaches away from doing so in that it specifically teaches having the animal remain in a stall and on the car during the milking process. The van der Lely '837 reference does not cure this defect. Even assuming for the sake of argument that there is a basis for combining the references, the resulting combination would, at most, include locating the robotic milking arm and monitoring animal-related criteria in connection with the milking of an animal on the translatable cart. This is not the invention claimed in method Claims 34, 39 and 40, as there is no translating of the cart to operably locate it with respect to an unoccupied milking stall and no moving of the animal from the cart and into the unoccupied milking stall.

For these reasons, the rejection of Claims 34, 39 and 40 under 35 U.S.C. 103 (a) as being unpatentable over Waybright in view of van der Lely cannot be sustained.

Conclusions

For the reasons as stated above, Applicant respectfully submits that all the claims subject to the present Appeal, namely Claims 32 –34 and 36–41 are in condition for allowance and that the rejection of the claims under both sections 102(b) and 103(a) of the Patent Law should be reversed.

Respectfully submitted,



Roger Aceto, Registration No. 24, 554
HARTER, SECREST & EMERY LLP
1600 Bausch & Lomb Place
Rochester, New York 14604
Telephone: 585-231-1118
Fax: 585-232-2152

Date: August 2, 2004

CLAIMS APPENDIX**Claims 32-34 and 36-41 on Appeal**

32. A method of presenting an animal to be milked in a milking parlor, the method comprising:

- (a) moving a first animal to be milked onto a first animal transport cart;
- (b) translating the first animal transport cart along a predetermined path relative to a plurality of milking stalls to operably locate the transport cart with respect to an unoccupied milking stall; and
- (c) moving the animal from the transport cart and into the unoccupied milking stall.

33. The method of Claim 32, further comprising forming a released area adjacent the plurality of milking stalls.

34. The method of Claim 32, further comprising operably locating a robotic arm with respect to the milking stall to dispose a milking claw into the milking stall.

35. (Cancelled)

36. The method of Claim 32, further comprising translating a second animal transport cart relative to the plurality of milking stalls.

37. The method of Claim 32, further comprising loading a plurality of animals onto the first animal transport cart.

38. The method of Claim 32, further comprising moving an ingress/egress gate from an open position to a closed position upon rearwardly loading the animal into the milking stall.

39. The method of Claim 32, further comprising acquiring data specific to a given animal during translation of the first animal transport cart.

40. The method of Claim 32, further comprising operably connecting a radio frequency identification reader to the first animal cart.

41. The method of Claim 32, further comprising urging the animal rearwardly into the milking stall by a distance independent of an adjacent milking stall.

Withdrawn Claims

1. A method of presenting an animal to be milked, the method comprising:
 - (a) rearwardly loading the animal into one of a plurality of milking stalls by passing the animal rearward through an ingress/egress end of the stall; and
 - (b) forwardly unloading the animal from the one of the plurality of milking stalls by passing the animal forward through the ingress/egress end and directly

into a common released area, each milking stall having its own unique exit path extending from the milking stall to the common released area.

2. The method of Claim 1, further comprising milking the animal prior to forwardly unloading the animal from the one of the plurality of milking stalls.

3. The method of Claim 1, further comprising passing the animal through an ingress/egress gate located at the ingress/egress end of the stall upon rearwardly loading the animal into the one of the plurality of milking stalls.

4. The method of Claim 1, further comprising operably aligning a milking robot with the one of the plurality of milking stalls prior to forwardly unloading the animal from the one of the plurality of milking stalls.

5. The method of Claim 1, further comprising loading the animal to be milked onto a transport cart and rearwardly loading the animal from the transport cart into the one of the plurality of milking stalls.

6. The method of Claim 1, further comprising monitoring animal specific data prior to unloading the animal from the one of the plurality of milking stalls.

7. The method of Claim 6, further comprising matching the monitored animal specific data with a corresponding identified animal.

8. The method of Claim 1, further comprising locating an operator pit adjacent a rear end of the milking stall.

9. The method of Claim 1, wherein the unique exit path associated with one of the plurality of milking stalls is parallel to a unique exit path associated with a second one of the milking stalls.

10. The method of Claim 1, further comprising moving a moveable platform from a spaced first position to a second position adjacent a rear end of the milking stall.

11. The method of Claim 1, further comprising simultaneously rearwardly loading a second animal into a second one of the plurality of milking stalls.

12. A method of presenting an animal to be milked, the method comprising:
 (a) rearwardly loading the animal into a milking stall from a moveable transport cart; and
 (b) forwardly unloading the animal from the milking stall directly into a common released area.

13. The method of Claim 12, further comprising milking the animal prior to forwardly unloading the animal from the milking stall.

14. The method of Claim 12, further comprising passing the animal tail first through an ingress/egress gate upon rearwardly loading the animal into the milking stall.
15. The method of Claim 12, further operatively aligning a milking robot with the milking stall prior to forwardly unloading the animal from the milking stall.
16. The method of Claim 12, further comprising loading the animal to be milked onto a transport cart prior to rearwardly loading the animal into the milking stall.
17. The method of Claim 12, further comprising monitoring animal specific information prior to unloading the animal from the milking stall.
18. The method of Claim 17, wherein monitoring animal specific information includes machine reading a tag connected to the animal.
19. The method of Claim 12, further comprising locating an operator pit adjacent a rear end of the milking stall.
20. The method of Claim 12, further comprising moving a moveable platform from a spaced first position to a second position adjacent a rear end of the milking stall.

21. The method of Claim 12, further comprising loading a plurality of animals onto the transport cart.

22. A method of presenting an animal to be milked, the method comprising:

(a) loading a first animal onto a transport cart;

(b) translating the transport cart to align with an unoccupied milking stall;

and

(c) rearwardly loading the first animal into the unoccupied milking stall from the transport cart.

23. The method of Claim 22, further comprising translating the transport cart along a direction transverse to a longitudinal dimension of the milking stall.

24. The method of Claim 22, further comprising forwardly unloading the first animal from the milking stall.

25. The method of Claim 22, further comprising forwardly unloading the first animal from the milking stall into a released area.

26. The method of Claim 22, further comprising forwardly unloading the first animal from the milking stall into a released area along a unique path.

27. The method of Claim 22, further comprising loading a second animal onto the transport cart prior to unloading the first animal.

28. The method of Claim 22, further comprising moving a moveable platform from a first position spaced from the milking stall to a second position adjacent a rear end of the milking stall.

29. The method of Claim 22, further comprising aligning a milking robot with the milking stall.

30. The method of Claim 22, further comprising acquiring animal specific data from the first animal on the transport cart.

31. The method of Claim 22, further comprising reading a radio frequency identification tag on the first cow when the first cow is in the transport cart.

42. A milking parlor comprising:

(a) a milking stall to receive an animal to be milked from a transport cart, the milking stall having an animal ingress/egress end; and

(b) the transport cart translatable relative to the milking stall between a first position aligned with the ingress/egress end of the milking stall and a second position spaced from the milking stall.

43. The milking parlor of Claim 42, further comprising an ingress/egress gate connected to the milking stall, the ingress/egress gate moveable between a closed position and an open position.

44. The milking parlor of Claim 43, wherein the ingress/egress gate is a lift gate.

45. The milking parlor of Claim 43, wherein the ingress/egress gate rotates about a horizontal axis.

46. The milking parlor of Claim 43, wherein the ingress/egress gate rotates about a vertical axis.

47. The milking parlor of Claim 42, wherein the milking stall includes a closed end opposite the ingress/egress end and further comprising an operator pit adjacent the closed end.

48. The milking parlor of Claim 42, further comprising a released area adjacent the ingress/egress end.

49. The milking parlor of Claim 42, further comprising a robotic arm connected relative to the milking stall and moveable between a milking position at least partially disposed within the milking stall and a retracted position at least partially disposed outside the milking stall.

50. The milking parlor of Claim 42, further comprising a RFID reader connected to the transport cart.

51. The milking parlor of Claim 42, further comprising a moveable platform moveable between a first position spaced from the milking stall and a second position adjacent a rear end of the milking stall.

EVIIDENCE APPENDIX

NONE

RELATED PROCEEDINGS APPENDIX

NONE

PATENTS

**IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE
BEFORE THE BOARD OF PATENT APPEALS AND INTERFERENCES**

Applicant:	Guo, Fangjiang	Atty. Docket:	88164.000002
Serial No.:	10/062,957	Examiner:	Piasecik, Susan L.
Filed:	January 31, 2002	Art Unit:	3643
Title:	SYSTEM FOR THE PRESENTATION OF ANIMALS TO BE MILKED AND METHOD		

Appeal Brief Pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §1.192

Mail Stop Appeal Brief - Patents
Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Sir:

Real Party in Interest

The inventor is the sole owner of the application and is the real party in interest.

Related Appeals and Interferences

There are no other appeals or interferences known to appellant or the appellant's legal representative, which will directly affect or be directly affected by or have a bearing on the Board's decision in the pending appeal.

Status of Claims

Claims 1-34 and 36-51 are pending in the application. All claims were finally rejected. After Applicant's Appeal Brief was filed, prosecution was reopened and all claims were made subject of a restriction requirement. Accordingly, Claims 1-31 and 42-51 are withdrawn from consideration. Claims 32-34 and 36-41 having been finally rejected are subject to the present appeal.

Status of Amendments

No amendments subsequent to the final action have been filed. An amendment, filed December 2, 2004, in response to the Office Action of June 3, 2004, was entered.

Summary of the Invention

The invention is a method of presenting an animal to be milked and in particular involves moving an animal by a transport cart to an unoccupied milking stall. As set out in independent Claim 32 the method involves the steps of

a) moving a first animal to be milked onto a first transport cart 70 (p.14, lines 1-10; p. 18, lines 1-6; see Figures 1-3, 6 and 7; note also "A" in Figures 1 and 2);

b) translating the transport cart 70 along a predetermined path relative to a plurality of milking stalls to align it with an unoccupied milking stall 20 (p. 15, lines 18-29; p.18, lines 7-10; see Figures 1-3 and 6); and

c) moving the animal from the transport cart and into an unoccupied milking stall (p. 16, lines 24-26; p.18, lines 7-11; see Figures 1 and 2 showing the unloading of an animal from "A").

Dependent Claim 33 adds to Claim 32 forming a released area 180 adjacent the plurality of milking stalls 20 (p. 13, lines 25-29; p. 16, line 29 to p.17, line16; p. 18, lines 21-24; see Figures 1 and 2).

Dependent Claim 34 adds to Claim 32 locating a robotic arm 44 with respect to the milking stall 20 to dispose a milking claw (no reference but shown in Figure 12-14 at the end of arm 44) in the milking stall (p. 11, lines 12-23; see Figures 6-12).

Dependent Claim 36 adds to Claim 32 the translating of a second animal transport cart 70 relative to the plurality of milking stalls 20 (see "B" in Figures 1 and 2).

Dependent Claim 37 adds to Claim 32 the loading of a plurality of animals onto the first transport cart 70 (p. 14, lines 28-31; p.15, lines 7-11).

Dependent Claim 38 adds to Claim 32 the step of moving an ingress/egress gate 30 from an open to a closed position upon rearwardly

loading the animal into the milking stall 20 from the transport cart 70 (p.18, lines 7-17).

Dependent Claim 39 adds to Claim 32 the step of acquiring animal specific data during the transport of the animal (p. 15, lines 1-3; p.16, lines 1-16).

Dependent Claim 40 adds to Claim 32 the connecting of a radio frequency identification reader 78 to the first animal cart (p. 15, lines 1-3).

Dependent Claim 41 adds to Claim 32 the urging of the animal rearwardly into the milking stall by a distance independent of an adjacent milking stall (p 14, lines 5-10; p. 15, lines 26-30; see Figures 1 and 2 where the animals back into a stall 20 from carts "A" or "B"

Issues

1. Whether Claims 32, 33, 36-38 and 41 are properly rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Waybright (US 5, 483, 921).
2. Whether Claims 34, 39 and 40 are properly rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Waybright '921 in view of van der Lely '837.

Argument

Applicant believes that a summary of the teachings of each of the cited and applied references will facilitate an understanding of Applicant's arguments.

Waybright, US 5, 483, 921, discloses a milking system wherein the animals walk forward from a holding pen 14 and into stalls 46 that are on a transport car 22. The car then moves along a path 21 and, in transit, passes a plurality of aligned stations 26, 82, 30 where operations such as washing and drying are performed on the animals in the stalls on the transport car. At the end of the path is a milking station 32. The car is stopped at the milking station; and the animals, while still in the stalls on the car, are milked. After milking, the car is returned along a parallel path 23 to the starting point where the animals walk in a forward direction off the car and onto an unloading platform 16.

As noted above, the animals are milked on the car so there is no movement of the animal from the car and into a milking stall and no alignment of the car with the ingress/egress end of a milking stall.

van der Lely, US 5, 771, 837, discloses a milking system wherein animals held in a housing area 1 are enticed by feed to move one at a time head first into a selection stall 3 where transponders on each animal in conjunction with sensors at the selection stall determine if a given animal should be milked. If selected, the animal is allowed to move forward from the selection stall and into a milking stall 2. The animal is automatically connected to a milking machine for milking after which the animal leaves the milking stall head first and reenters the housing area. Sensors at the stalls collect certain animal-related data from each animal.

1. Claims 32, 33, 36-38 and 41 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Waybright '921.

A. In Waybright, the animals walk head first from a loading pen 14 first into a loading station 24 and then into stalls 46 arranged side-by-side on a car 22. The car moves along a forward segment 21 of a path that carries the animals through a sequence of stations 26, 28 and 30 (holding about 12 minutes at each station) until a milking station 32 is reached at the end of the path. At the milking station, the car is stopped and an operator connects each animal on the car to milking machines (see col. 6, lines 53-57). After milking, the car first is moved to a transfer station 36 where the car reverses direction for travel back along a parallel segment 23 to an unloading or exit station 38 (the exit station 38 being adjacent the loading station 24). At the unloading station, the animals are moved off of the car (and out of the stalls 46) head first.

The Examiner considers that Waybright teaches translating a transport cart relative to milking stalls 32 and moving the animal into the stall (Final Rejection, p. 4). However, as perceived by the Applicant, Waybright '921 discloses a method and associated apparatus involving:

- moving the animals head first into stalls 46 arranged on a car 22;

- moving the car to a milking station 32 and milking the animals while they remain on the car 22;
- moving the car 22 back towards the point of beginning; and
- moving the animals in a head-first direction out of the stalls 46 and off of the car 22.

B. Independent Claim 32 (and dependent Claims 33 and 36-38) recites the method steps of:

"(b) translating the first animal transport cart ... to a plurality of milking stalls to operably locate the transport cart with respect to an unoccupied milking stall; and

"(c) moving an animal from the transport cart and into the unoccupied milking stall."

In the reference, there is no moving of an animal from a cart (or car) and into an unoccupied milking stall because the stalls of the reference are on the car. Accordingly, there can be no moving of the car itself to an unoccupied milking stall because the stalls are themselves on the car.

As a further distinction, the reference lacks any disclosure of "moving the animal from the transport cart and into the unoccupied milking stall". This is because in the reference, milking occurs while the animal remains in the stall on the car.

For a rejection under 35 U.S.C. 102 (b) to stand, each element of the claim(s) must be found in a single reference. This is not the case here with respect to the method of Claim 32. In particular, Waybright fails to anticipate the invention as set out in independent method claim 32 in that the reference fails to disclose at least the steps of:

- moving the animal on a transport cart to "locate the transport cart with respect to an unoccupied milking stall"; and
- "moving the animal from the transport cart and into the unoccupied milking stall."

As the reference fails to disclose claimed method steps as recited in Claim 32, the rejection of independent Claim 32 (and dependent Claims 33 and 36-38

which include all the limitations of Claim 32) under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Waybright '921 cannot be sustained.

With respect to dependent Claim 33 the Examiner considers the Waybright area 36 a "released area". In fact no animal is "released" to Waybright's area 36. Instead Waybright's area 36 is a "return station" where the carts carrying the animals turn to go back to the starting point. No animal is "released" from Waybright's cart to the area 36. Accordingly, the rejection of Claim 33 as being anticipated by Waybright cannot be sustained.

With respect to dependent Claim 36 Waybright does not disclose translating a second transport cart relative to the plurality of milking stalls. The item 40 referenced by the Examiner as a "Transport cart" is in fact "a stationary motor assembly" and not a cart. Even so any second cart that might be disclosed by Waybright also could not move relative to a plurality of milking stalls because the milking stalls would be on the cart! Accordingly, the rejection of Claim 36 as being anticipated by Waybright cannot be sustained.

With respect to dependent Claim 41, it is pointed out that the reference clearly describes a method of moving the animals head first into stalls 46 arranged on the car 24 and then moving the animals head first out of the stalls and off the car. There is no disclosure of "urging the animals rearwardly into the milking stall" as set out in Claim 41. Accordingly, the rejection of Claim 41 as being anticipated by Waybright cannot be sustained.

2. Claims 34, 39 and 40 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102 (a) as being unpatentable over Waybright '921 in view of van der Lely ' 837.

A. Dependent method Claims 34, 39 and 40 include all the limitations of Claim 32 including the steps of "translating the ... transport cart ... relative to a plurality of milking stalls to operably locate the transport cars with respect to an unoccupied milking stall" and "moving the animal from the transport cart and into the unoccupied stall". Dependent Claim 34 adds the step of aligning a milking robot with one of the milking stalls, and Claims 39 and 40 add steps related to the monitoring of certain animal related criteria.

As noted above, Waybright does not disclose moving an animal from a cart and into a milking stall. In fact, the reference teaches away from doing so in that it specifically teaches having the animal remain in a stall and on the car during the milking process. The van der Lely '837 reference does not cure this defect. Even assuming for the sake of argument that there is a basis for combining the references, the resulting combination would, at most, include locating the robotic milking arm and monitoring animal-related criteria in connection with the milking of an animal on the translatable cart. This is not the invention claimed in method Claims 34, 39 and 40, as there is no translating of the cart to operably locate it with respect to an unoccupied milking stall and no moving of the animal from the cart and into the unoccupied milking stall.

For these reasons, the rejection of Claims 34, 39 and 40 under 35 U.S.C. 103 (a) as being unpatentable over Waybright in view of van der Lely cannot be sustained.

Conclusions

For the reasons as stated above, Applicant respectfully submits that all the claims subject to the present Appeal, namely Claims 32-34 and 36-41 are in condition for allowance and that the rejection of the claims under both sections 102(b) and 103(a) of the Patent Law should be reversed.

Respectfully submitted,



Roger Aceto, Registration No. 24, 554
HARTER, SECREST & EMERY LLP
1600 Bausch & Lomb Place
Rochester, New York 14604
Telephone: 585-231-1118
Fax: 585-232-2152

Date: August 2, 2004

CLAIMS APPENDIX**Claims 32-34 and 36-41 on Appeal**

32. A method of presenting an animal to be milked in a milking parlor, the method comprising:

- (a) moving a first animal to be milked onto a first animal transport cart;
- (b) translating the first animal transport cart along a predetermined path relative to a plurality of milking stalls to operably locate the transport cart with respect to an unoccupied milking stall; and
- (c) moving the animal from the transport cart and into the unoccupied milking stall.

33. The method of Claim 32, further comprising forming a released area adjacent the plurality of milking stalls.

34. The method of Claim 32, further comprising operably locating a robotic arm with respect to the milking stall to dispose a milking claw into the milking stall.

35. (Cancelled)

36. The method of Claim 32, further comprising translating a second animal transport cart relative to the plurality of milking stalls.

37. The method of Claim 32, further comprising loading a plurality of animals onto the first animal transport cart.

38. The method of Claim 32, further comprising moving an ingress/egress gate from an open position to a closed position upon rearwardly loading the animal into the milking stall.

39. The method of Claim 32, further comprising acquiring data specific to a given animal during translation of the first animal transport cart.

40. The method of Claim 32, further comprising operably connecting a radio frequency identification reader to the first animal cart.

41. The method of Claim 32, further comprising urging the animal rearwardly into the milking stall by a distance independent of an adjacent milking stall.

Withdrawn Claims

1. A method of presenting an animal to be milked, the method comprising:
 - (a) rearwardly loading the animal into one of a plurality of milking stalls by passing the animal rearward through an ingress/egress end of the stall; and
 - (b) forwardly unloading the animal from the one of the plurality of milking stalls by passing the animal forward through the ingress/egress end and directly

into a common released area, each milking stall having its own unique exit path extending from the milking stall to the common released area.

2. The method of Claim 1, further comprising milking the animal prior to forwardly unloading the animal from the one of the plurality of milking stalls.

3. The method of Claim 1, further comprising passing the animal through an ingress/egress gate located at the ingress/egress end of the stall upon rearwardly loading the animal into the one of the plurality of milking stalls.

4. The method of Claim 1, further comprising operably aligning a milking robot with the one of the plurality of milking stalls prior to forwardly unloading the animal from the one of the plurality of milking stalls.

5. The method of Claim 1, further comprising loading the animal to be milked onto a transport cart and rearwardly loading the animal from the transport cart into the one of the plurality of milking stalls.

6. The method of Claim 1, further comprising monitoring animal specific data prior to unloading the animal from the one of the plurality of milking stalls.

7. The method of Claim 6, further comprising matching the monitored animal specific data with a corresponding identified animal.

8. The method of Claim 1, further comprising locating an operator pit adjacent a rear end of the milking stall.

9. The method of Claim 1, wherein the unique exit path associated with one of the plurality of milking stalls is parallel to a unique exit path associated with a second one of the milking stalls.

10. The method of Claim 1, further comprising moving a moveable platform from a spaced first position to a second position adjacent a rear end of the milking stall.

11. The method of Claim 1, further comprising simultaneously rearwardly loading a second animal into a second one of the plurality of milking stalls.

12. A method of presenting an animal to be milked, the method comprising:

(a) rearwardly loading the animal into a milking stall from a moveable transport cart; and

(b) forwardly unloading the animal from the milking stall directly into a common released area.

13. The method of Claim 12, further comprising milking the animal prior to forwardly unloading the animal from the milking stall.

14. The method of Claim 12, further comprising passing the animal tail first through an ingress/egress gate upon rearwardly loading the animal into the milking stall.
15. The method of Claim 12, further operatively aligning a milking robot with the milking stall prior to forwardly unloading the animal from the milking stall.
16. The method of Claim 12, further comprising loading the animal to be milked onto a transport cart prior to rearwardly loading the animal into the milking stall.
17. The method of Claim 12, further comprising monitoring animal specific information prior to unloading the animal from the milking stall.
18. The method of Claim 17, wherein monitoring animal specific information includes machine reading a tag connected to the animal.
19. The method of Claim 12, further comprising locating an operator pit adjacent a rear end of the milking stall.
20. The method of Claim 12, further comprising moving a moveable platform from a spaced first position to a second position adjacent a rear end of the milking stall.

21. The method of Claim 12, further comprising loading a plurality of animals onto the transport cart.

22. A method of presenting an animal to be milked, the method comprising:

(a) loading a first animal onto a transport cart;

(b) translating the transport cart to align with an unoccupied milking stall;

and

(c) rearwardly loading the first animal into the unoccupied milking stall from the transport cart.

23. The method of Claim 22, further comprising translating the transport cart along a direction transverse to a longitudinal dimension of the milking stall.

24. The method of Claim 22, further comprising forwardly unloading the first animal from the milking stall.

25. The method of Claim 22, further comprising forwardly unloading the first animal from the milking stall into a released area.

26. The method of Claim 22, further comprising forwardly unloading the first animal from the milking stall into a released area along a unique path.

27. The method of Claim 22, further comprising loading a second animal onto the transport cart prior to unloading the first animal.

28. The method of Claim 22, further comprising moving a moveable platform from a first position spaced from the milking stall to a second position adjacent a rear end of the milking stall.

29. The method of Claim 22, further comprising aligning a milking robot with the milking stall.

30. The method of Claim 22, further comprising acquiring animal specific data from the first animal on the transport cart.

31. The method of Claim 22, further comprising reading a radio frequency identification tag on the first cow when the first cow is in the transport cart.

42. A milking parlor comprising:

(a) a milking stall to receive an animal to be milked from a transport cart, the milking stall having an animal ingress/egress end; and

(b) the transport cart translatable relative to the milking stall between a first position aligned with the ingress/egress end of the milking stall and a second position spaced from the milking stall.

43. The milking parlor of Claim 42, further comprising an ingress/egress gate connected to the milking stall, the ingress/egress gate moveable between a closed position and an open position.

44. The milking parlor of Claim 43, wherein the ingress/egress gate is a lift gate.

45. The milking parlor of Claim 43, wherein the ingress/egress gate rotates about a horizontal axis.

46. The milking parlor of Claim 43, wherein the ingress/egress gate rotates about a vertical axis.

47. The milking parlor of Claim 42, wherein the milking stall includes a closed end opposite the ingress/egress end and further comprising an operator pit adjacent the closed end.

48. The milking parlor of Claim 42, further comprising a released area adjacent the ingress/egress end.

49. The milking parlor of Claim 42, further comprising a robotic arm connected relative to the milking stall and moveable between a milking position at least partially disposed within the milking stall and a retracted position at least partially disposed outside the milking stall.

50. The milking parlor of Claim 42, further comprising a RFID reader connected to the transport cart.

51. The milking parlor of Claim 42, further comprising a moveable platform moveable between a first position spaced from the milking stall and a second position adjacent a rear end of the milking stall.

EVIIDENCE APPENDIX

NONE

RELATED PROCEEDINGS APPENDIX

NONE